

Sub A-7

Claims

1 1. A method of establishing an audio call path between an
2 Internet user accessing a web site and an agent of the web site,
3 such method comprising the steps of:
4 providing a web site with a plurality of audio access icons
5 and a plurality of agent groups;
6 associating an agent group of the plurality of agent groups
7 with a subject matter of each audio-access icon of the web site;
8 and
9 establishing a voice path between the user and an agent of
10 the associated agent group based upon activation of a audio-
11 access icon by the user.

1 2. The method as in claim 1 further comprising providing a
2 plurality of informational web pages for access by the user.

1 3. The method as in claim 2 further comprising disposing an
2 audio access icon of the plurality of audio access icons on at
3 least some web pages of the plurality of informational web pages.

Sub B-1
1 4. The method as in claim 1 wherein the step of associating an
2 agent group with each icon further comprises correlating a
3 training level of an agent group of the plurality of agent groups
4 with an information content of an audio-access icon of the at
5 least some web pages.

1 5. The method as in claim 1 wherein the step of establishing an
2 call path between the user and an agent of the associated agent
3 group based upon activation of a audio-access icon further
4 comprises placing the user in a call queue of the associated
5 group until a next available agent becomes available.

1 6. The method as in claim 5 further comprising measuring a time
2 period that the user has been in the call queue.

1 *Sub D3.* The method as in claim 6 further comprising comparing the
2 measured time with a threshold value and overflowing the user to
3 a queue of another agent group when the measured time exceeds the
4 threshold.

1 8. The method as in claim 1 further comprising selecting the
2 agent from the associated agent group.

1 9. The method as in claim 8 wherein the step of establishing an
2 call path between the user and an agent of the associated agent
3 group based upon activation of a audio-access icon further
4 comprises transferring an Internet address of the selected agent
5 to the user.

1 10. The method as in claim 8 wherein the step of establishing an
2 call path between the user and an agent of the associated agent
3 group based upon activation of a audio-access icon further
4 comprises transferring an Internet address of the user to the
5 selected agent.

1 11. The method as in claim 1 further comprising collecting
2 information from the user by a web site controller.

1 12. The method as in claim 11 wherein the step of collecting
2 information from the user further comprises the web site
3 controller decoding a web access request to recover a user
4 Internet address.

1 13. The method as in claim 11 wherein the step of collecting
2 information from the user further comprises the web site
3 controller opening a web page information entry window for
4 receipt of information from the user.

1 14. The method as in claim 13 wherein the step of collecting
2 information from the user further comprises receiving a credit
3 card number from the user through the web page information entry
4 window.

1 ~~Sub 14~~ The method as in claim 11 further comprising transferring
2 the collected information and an identifier of the selected agent
3 to a database of the web site and plurality of agent groups.

1 16. The method as in claim 15 further comprising retrieving
2 customer records of the user from the database.

1 17. The method as in claim 16 further comprising displaying the
2 customer records at a terminal of the selected agent.

1 ~~Sub 18~~ 18. A method of servicing an inquiry from a user through the
2 Internet, such method comprising the steps of:
3 proving a web site with a plurality of audio access icons;
4 associating an agent group with a subject matter of each
5 audio-access icon of each of the at least some web pages; and
6 providing an call path between the user and an agent of the
7 associated agent group based upon activation of a audio-access
8 icon.

1 19. A method of servicing an inquiry from a user through the
2 Internet, such method comprising the steps of:

3 proving a web site with a plurality of web pages for access
4 by the user;

5 providing a audio-access icon on at least some web pages of
6 the web site;

7 associating an agent group with a subject matter of each
8 audio-access icon of each of the at least some web pages; and

9 providing an call path between the user and an agent of the
10 associated agent group based upon activation of a audio-access
11 icon.

1 20. Apparatus for establishing an audio call path between an
2 Internet user accessing a web site and an agent of the web site,
3 such apparatus comprising:

4 means for proving a web site with a plurality of audio
5 access icons and a plurality of agent groups;

6 means for associating an agent group of the plurality of
7 agent groups with a subject matter of each audio-access icon of
8 the web site; and

9 means for establishing a call path between the user and an
10 agent of the associated agent group based upon activation of a
11 audio-access icon by the user.

1 21. The apparatus as in claim 20 further comprising means for
2 providing a plurality of informational web pages for access by
3 the user.

1 22. The apparatus as in claim 21 further comprising means for
2 disposing an audio access icon of the plurality of audio access
3 icons on at least some web pages of the plurality of
4 informational web pages.

1 ~~Sub 22~~ The method as in claim 22 wherein the means for associating
2 an agent group with each icon further comprises means for
3 correlating a training level of an agent group of the plurality
4 of agent groups with an information content of an audio-access
5 icon of the at least some web pages.

1 24. The apparatus as in claim 1 wherein the means for
2 establishing an call path between the user and an agent of the
3 associated agent group based upon activation of a audio-access
4 icon further comprises means for placing the user in a call queue
5 of the associated group until a next available agent becomes
6 available.

25. The apparatus as in claim 24 further comprising means for
measuring a time period that the user has been in the call queue.

1 ~~Sub 26~~ 26. The apparatus as in claim 25 further comprising means for
2 comparing the measured time with a threshold value and
3 overflowing the user to a queue of another agent group when the
4 measured time exceeds the threshold.

1a 27. The apparatus as in claim ~~26~~²⁰ further comprising means for
2 selecting the agent from the associated agent group.

1 28. The apparatus as in claim 27 wherein the means for
2 establishing an call path between the user and an agent of the
3 associated agent group based upon activation of a audio-access
4 icon further comprises means for transferring an Internet address
5 of the selected agent to the user.

1 29. The apparatus as in claim 27 wherein the means for
2 establishing an call path between the user and an agent of the

associated agent group based upon activation of a audio-access icon further comprises means for transferring an Internet address of the user to the selected agent.

30. The apparatus as in claim ³⁰19 further comprising means for collecting information from the user by a web site controller.

31. The apparatus as in claim 30 wherein the means for collecting information from the user further comprises means within the web site controller for decoding a web access request to recover a user Internet address.

32. The apparatus as in claim 30 wherein the means for collecting information from the user further comprises means within the web site controller for opening a web page information entry window for receipt of information from the user.

33. The apparatus as in claim 32 wherein the means for collecting information from the user further comprises means for receiving a credit card number from the user through the web page information entry window.

34. The apparatus as in claim 30 further comprising means for transferring the collected information and an identifier of the selected agent to a database of the web site and plurality of agent groups.

35. The apparatus as in claim 34 further comprising means for retrieving customer records of the user from the database.

1 36. The apparatus as in claim 35 further comprising means for
2 displaying the customer records at a terminal of the selected
3 agent.

Sub A3
1 37. Apparatus for establishing an audio call path between an
2 Internet user accessing a web site and an agent of the web site,
3 such apparatus comprising:
4 a web site with a plurality of audio access icons and a
5 plurality of agent groups;
6 a call distribution controller operably coupled to the web
7 site which associates an agent group of the plurality of agent
8 groups with a subject matter of each audio-access icon of the web
9 site; and
10 a local area network which establishes a call path between
11 the user and an agent of the associated agent group based upon
12 activation of a audio-access icon by the user.

1 38. The apparatus as in claim 37 further comprising a web site
2 controller which provides a plurality of informational web pages
3 for access by the user.

1 39. The apparatus as in claim 38 further comprising a display
2 controller coupled to the web site controller which disposes an
3 audio access icon of the plurality of audio access icons on at
4 least some web pages of the plurality of informational web pages.

1 40. The apparatus as in claim 39 further comprising a display
2 look-up table in a memory of the web site controller which
3 relates an information content of each web page of the at least
4 some web pages with the audio-access icon disposed on the web
5 page.

1 41. The method as in claim 40 wherein the call distribution
2 controller which associates an agent group with each icon further
3 comprises a call distribution look-up table which correlates a
4 training level of an agent group of the plurality of agent groups ,
5 with an information content of an audio-access icon of the at
6 least some web pages.

1 42. The apparatus as in claim 37 wherein the local area network
2 which establishes an call path between the user and an agent of
3 the associated agent group based upon activation of a audio-
4 access icon further comprises a setup controller which places the
5 user in a call queue of the associated group until a next
6 available agent becomes available.

1 43. The apparatus as in claim 42 further comprising a timer
2 within the call distribution controller which measures a time
3 period that the user has been in the call queue.

1 44. The apparatus as in claim 43 further comprising a comparator
2 within the call distribution controller which compares the
3 measured time with a threshold value and which overflows the user
4 to a queue of another agent group when the measured time exceeds
5 the threshold.

1 45. The apparatus as in claim 37 further comprising an agent
2 activity controller which selects the agent from the associated
3 agent group.

1 46. The apparatus as in claim 45 wherein the local area network
2 which establishes an call path between the user and an agent of
3 the associated agent group based upon activation of a audio-
4 access icon further comprises an agent transfer controller

5 coupled to the call distribution controller which transfers an
6 Internet address of the selected agent to the user.

1 47. The apparatus as in claim 46 wherein the local area network
2 which establishes an call path between the user and an agent of
3 the associated agent group based upon activation of a audio-
4 access icon further comprises a user transfer controller which
5 transfers an Internet address of the user to the selected agent.

1 48. The apparatus as in claim 37 further comprising an
2 interrogation processor which collects user information.

1 49. The apparatus as in claim 48 wherein the interrogation
2 processor further comprises a packet decoder which decodes web
3 site access requests to recover a user Internet address.

1 50. The apparatus as in claim 49 wherein the interrogation
2 processor further comprises an entry window processor coupled to
3 the web site controller for opening a web page information entry
4 window for receipt of information from the user.

1 51. The apparatus as in claim 50 wherein the interrogation
2 processor further comprises a memory coupled to the interrogation
3 processor which stores information received from the user through
4 the web page information entry window.

1 52. The apparatus as in claim 51 further comprising a database
2 coupled to the call distribution processor for storing customer
3 records.

1 53. The apparatus as in claim 52 further comprising a
2 communications processor which transfers the information

3 collected from the user and an identifier of the selected agent
4 to a database of the web site.

1 54. The apparatus as in claim 53 further comprising a database
2 processor coupled to the database which retrieves customer
3 records of the user from the database based upon the information
4 collected from the user and transferred to the database.

1 55. The apparatus as in claim 54 further comprising an agent
2 terminal which displays the customer records to the selected
3 agent.

56. The apparatus as in claim 55 further comprising a user interface
57. The apparatus as in claim 56 further comprising a user interface
58. The apparatus as in claim 57 further comprising a user interface
59. The apparatus as in claim 58 further comprising a user interface
60. The apparatus as in claim 59 further comprising a user interface
61. The apparatus as in claim 60 further comprising a user interface
62. The apparatus as in claim 61 further comprising a user interface
63. The apparatus as in claim 62 further comprising a user interface
64. The apparatus as in claim 63 further comprising a user interface
65. The apparatus as in claim 64 further comprising a user interface
66. The apparatus as in claim 65 further comprising a user interface
67. The apparatus as in claim 66 further comprising a user interface
68. The apparatus as in claim 67 further comprising a user interface
69. The apparatus as in claim 68 further comprising a user interface
70. The apparatus as in claim 69 further comprising a user interface
71. The apparatus as in claim 70 further comprising a user interface
72. The apparatus as in claim 71 further comprising a user interface
73. The apparatus as in claim 72 further comprising a user interface
74. The apparatus as in claim 73 further comprising a user interface
75. The apparatus as in claim 74 further comprising a user interface
76. The apparatus as in claim 75 further comprising a user interface
77. The apparatus as in claim 76 further comprising a user interface
78. The apparatus as in claim 77 further comprising a user interface
79. The apparatus as in claim 78 further comprising a user interface
80. The apparatus as in claim 79 further comprising a user interface
81. The apparatus as in claim 80 further comprising a user interface
82. The apparatus as in claim 81 further comprising a user interface
83. The apparatus as in claim 82 further comprising a user interface
84. The apparatus as in claim 83 further comprising a user interface
85. The apparatus as in claim 84 further comprising a user interface
86. The apparatus as in claim 85 further comprising a user interface
87. The apparatus as in claim 86 further comprising a user interface
88. The apparatus as in claim 87 further comprising a user interface
89. The apparatus as in claim 88 further comprising a user interface
90. The apparatus as in claim 89 further comprising a user interface
91. The apparatus as in claim 90 further comprising a user interface
92. The apparatus as in claim 91 further comprising a user interface
93. The apparatus as in claim 92 further comprising a user interface
94. The apparatus as in claim 93 further comprising a user interface
95. The apparatus as in claim 94 further comprising a user interface
96. The apparatus as in claim 95 further comprising a user interface
97. The apparatus as in claim 96 further comprising a user interface
98. The apparatus as in claim 97 further comprising a user interface
99. The apparatus as in claim 98 further comprising a user interface
100. The apparatus as in claim 99 further comprising a user interface